

**Testimony of
The Honorable Don Young (AK-AL)
Before the
House Armed Services Committee
Hearing: FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act Member
Request Day
2212 Rayburn HOB
April 14, 2015**

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee, thank you for holding this hearing, and for giving me the opportunity to testify on behalf of the State of Alaska. I will keep my remarks today brief, and my staff will be happy to follow up with you to provide additional information on all of these issues, if needed.

According to Air Force General Billy Mitchell, “he who holds Alaska will hold the world, and I think [Alaska] is the most important strategic place in the world.” This was true when Gen. Mitchell testified to that fact in 1933, and it remains true today. Alaska offers unparalleled training areas, including the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex. While ranges in the Lower 48 are parts of states, JPARC’s training areas are the size of states. JPARC includes 65,000 square miles of unencumbered air space (The size of Florida), 2,490 square miles of land space (The size of Delaware), and 42,000 square nautical miles of surface, subsurface, and overlying airspace over the Gulf of Alaska (The size of Virginia). Support for service members, their families, and veterans runs deep in Alaska’s DNA. Alaska’s active duty military personnel, combined with our Veteran population, equate to more than 15% of the state’s entire population. We as Alaskans pride ourselves in the strong, mutually beneficial relationship we have with our Alaska-based military members.

As you continue to in the FY 2016 NDAA process, I would like to highlight several specific funding and language requests that are important to Alaska and the United States.

Top Priorities

PACAF F-35 Basing Sense of Congress

First, I would like to request that the Committee includes a Sense of Congress regarding the Air Force’s F-35 basing in the Pacific. In August of 2014, Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska was named as the preferred Alternative for Pacific F-35 basing. Regardless, it is important to continue to highlight Congress’ desire to see the Air Force consider Alaska’s military value as part of its strategic basing process. Pacific F-35s should be based at a location that has the ability to host fighter-based bilateral and multilateral training opportunities, has sufficient airspace and ranges to meet its air

training requirements, has existing facilities to support personnel, operations, and logistical needs, has limited encroachment, and minimizes the overall construction and operational costs. Eielson offers the Air Force these capabilities

Native American/Hawaiian SBA 8(a) Fix

Second, I request a fix to the Native American/Hawaiian Small Business Administration 8(a) program. Late in Conference for the FY2010 NDAA, an original “good government” provision, Section 802 was modified to unfairly isolate native contractors for enhanced scrutiny. This new provision, Section 811, has had large negative effects on Native American and Hawaiian community-based contracting organizations participating in the SBA’s 8(a) Program. Given Section 811’s negative effect on Native 8(a)s in my state, I would like the entire provision repealed. If this is not possible, I request that language be included to modify Section 811 back to Section 802, to ensure that the good government and accountability requirements are applied universally to all contractors. This will ensure that there are fair, equitable, and balanced requirements for all contractors seeking Federal sole source contracts. If this language is not possible, I request that the committee include language to clarify existing law to allow the approval authority to be delegable unless specifically stated otherwise.

USAF Land Transfer to Galena, Alaska

Third, I request a no-cost land transfer from the Air Force to the city of Galena, Alaska. The western Alaska town of Galena was hit by a devastating flood in the spring of 2013 (the third major flood event in Galena in the past 50 years). Federal and State Disasters were declared, and more than \$75 million (\$56 mil Federal, \$19 mil state) has been spent on recovery efforts thus far. While Galena has made great strides to recover from this terrible disaster, its residents are still vulnerable to catastrophic floods due to its location in the Yukon River flood plain. To eliminate the flood threat, the City of Galena would like to move to higher ground. They have done surveys of the areas, and found an optimal area above the flood plain in the former home of Campion Air Force Radar Station. I request language authorizing a no cost transfer of this land to the City of Galena.

Funding Requests

State Sponsored Aerospace Facilities Funding

I request a \$10 million funding authorization request for State Sponsored Aerospace Facilities. In the enacted FY2014 NDAA, language was included to recognize the “legitimate role of state government sponsored aerospace infrastructure as space assets.” This language specifically urged the Department of Defense to “consider” the use that state government capabilities can provide to the national security interests of the United States. As yet, DOD has taken no action or inquiry to pursue the Committee’s initiative. It is my hope that the Committee will take the next step and specifically provide \$10 million in authority, from currently existing funds, for DOD support of commercially licensed spaceports or launch and range complexes, which provide mid-to-low inclination orbits or polar high inclination orbits in support of the national security space program. A similar request was included in the enacted FY 2015 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015.

Ground-Based Missile Defense & Sensors

I request that the Committee authorizes the PB-16 funding request for Ground-Based Missile Defense (GMD) and Sensors, which includes infrastructure at Fort Greely, Clear Air Force Station, and Erickson AFS. With North Korea's continuing volatility, I request that the Committee fully support these increases and the \$1.763 billion for the GMD program. This funding will continue the development and sustainment of the GMD weapon system and fully fund the increase to 60 Ground-Based Interceptors at Fort Greely. I also support the \$136.6 million to continue developing the Missile Defense Agency's Long Range Discrimination Radar System.

Alaska Military Construction

I request that the Committee authorizes the PB-16 funding request for Alaska Military Construction (MILCON). This funding includes several important MILCON projects in Alaska, totaling \$79.2 million. These projects include \$7.8 million for improvements to the Physical Readiness Training Facility at Fort Greely as well as \$37 million to construct a F-35A Simulator facility and to add to and alter a Squadron Operations/Aircraft Maintenance Unit and \$34.4 million to repair Eielson Air Force Base's Central Heat and Power Plant at Eielson Air Force Base. I request that the Committee fully supports these authorizations.

Civil Military Programs

I request authorization for the PB-16 funding level for Civil Military Programs, consisting of the National Guard Youth Challenge (NGYC) and Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) Programs. NGYC is a critical tool to rehabilitate troubled teenagers. IRT, which contributes directly to military readiness and provides realistic training in a joint environment for National Guard, Reserve, and Active Duty members, prepares them to serve during a national crisis at home or abroad. I support the PB-16 level of \$160.3 million for these programs.

F-35 Procurement & RDT&E

I request that the Committee authorizes the PB-16 funding level for the United States Air Force's procurement and research and development of the F-35A. As the Committee is aware, Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska is the Air Force's preferred alternative for the basing of PACAF F-35s. This funding is necessary to ensure the F-35 delivery timeframe stays on track for Eielson and other F-35 basing locations.

Language Requests

Expand Space-Available Travel

Section 662 in the enacted FY 2013 NDAA fully expanded the Space-Available Travel privilege to National Guard Grey Area Retirees and their Surviving Spouses. Unfortunately, the DoD recently reauthorized the Space Available program per the direction of the F& 2013 NDAA, and did not include Gray Area retirees as an included category for full Space-Available privileges. I request that the Committee include language—and the intent—of the aforementioned provision.

Report on Efforts to Reduce Energy Costs at Military Installations

While Alaskan military installations have incredible strategic value and incredible training ranges available to them, several also have high energy costs—among the highest in the Department of Defense (DoD). This report will require DoD to submit a report to the Congressional Defense Committees detailing the efforts to achieve cost savings at military installations with high energy costs. This report will include a comprehensive, installation specific assessment of feasible and mission-appropriate energy initiatives, an assessment of current sources of energy in areas with high energy costs, a comprehensive implementation strategy for feasible energy efficiency options, an explanation on how military services are working in collaboration to leverage lessons learned on energy efficiency solutions, and an assessment of State and local partnership opportunities that could achieve efficiency and cost savings. I request

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, and other members of the Armed Services Committee, I again thank you for giving me this opportunity. I encourage all of you to come to Alaska to see firsthand our strategic value, our incredible training areas, and the support Alaskans provide the military and its members. A strong defense presence in Alaska is not only vital to Alaska, but also vital to the national security of the United States.